

# THE MILITANT

EDITORIAL

**Cuba takes the high ground—  
Free the Cuban Five!**

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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 74/NO. 29 AUGUST 2, 2010

## Immigrant deaths soar in Arizona desert

BY SETH GALINSKY

Just two days after reports that deaths of undocumented workers crossing the Arizona desert are soaring, Homeland Security secretary Janet Napolitano announced the U.S. government is stepping up immigration enforcement along the border.

Bruce Parks, the Pima County Medical Examiner, told the Associated Press July 16 that 40 bodies had been brought to his office since July 1 in the midst of a severe heat wave. Tighter measures at the U.S.-Mexico border have pushed immigrants without papers to attempt crossing in more remote, dangerous areas.

Last year, known deaths of immigrants along the entire U.S.-Mexico border rose to 422, the highest since 492 died in 2005.

In an op-ed piece in the *Arizona*  
Continued on page 5

## Finance bill seeks to avert new bank crisis

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

The financial “reform” bill passed by Congress has been described by the capitalist media as the biggest overhaul of Wall Street since the Great Depression. But its provisions offer no relief from the capitalist depression and social crisis gripping working people.

White House officials claim the new law will prevent another economic collapse similar to the one in 2008 that led to the failure of Lehman Brothers and Washington Mutual, and the creation of a \$700 billion government fund to bail out American International Group, Citigroup, and other financial institutions.

The 2,300-page legislation, which the Senate passed July 15 and the House of Representatives two weeks earlier, sets up a “Financial Stabil-  
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## N.Y. socialists’ ballot drive goes over top

‘Workers need our own political party’



Militant/Brian Williams

Socialist Workers candidates in New York talk with participants at Pathfinder booth during Harlem Book Fair July 17. Behind table from right, Willie Cotton, SWP candidate for U.S. Senate, and Róger Calero, candidate for U.S. Congress in 15th District.

BY ANGEL LARISCY  
AND BRIAN WILLIAMS

NEW YORK—Socialist campaigners here celebrated completion of a 10-day effort July 18 to collect 7,000 signatures to place Róger Calero on the November ballot for U.S. Congress in the 15th District. The Socialist Workers Party is also running Dan Fein for governor and Willie Cotton

and Sarah Ruth Robinett for two open U.S. Senate seats.

Some 50 people came to a campaign forum the evening of July 17 where Calero and Robinett spoke. This included two people who had met campaigners on the streets that day or in the week before, as well as a coworker of Fein and two others attending

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## SWP candidates in Iowa enter home stretch in petition drive



Militant/Margaret Trowe

Helen Meyers, left, Socialist Workers Party candidate for lieutenant governor of Iowa, campaigning recently at shopping area in Des Moines.

BY MARGARET TROWE

DES MOINES, Iowa—The socialist campaign here is wrapping up a successful drive to get on the ballot.

The SWP is running David Rosenfeld for governor, Helen Meyers for lieutenant governor, Rebecca Williamson for U.S. Congress, and Margaret Trowe for secretary of agriculture.

Campaign supporters have fanned out across Iowa to collect 2,000 signatures to put Rosenfeld and Meyers on the ballot, with 1,460 in hand as of July 21. More than 450 people also signed to get ballot status for Williamson.

The SWP candidates and supporters plan a big campaign day on Saturday, July 24 in Des Moines and Waterloo. They will file petitions July 28.

## New Orleans cops indicted for Hurricane Katrina shootings

BY ANGEL LARISCY

A federal grand jury indicted five current and one former New Orleans cop July 12. Four of the men are charged with shooting six unarmed civilians, killing two, in September 2005, during the aftermath of Hurri-

cane Katrina. All six are charged with covering up the crimes. U.S. Attorney Jim Letten, appointed by George W. Bush, announced the charges.

The indictments and ongoing investigations show a pattern of brutality carried out by New Orleans police officers and concealed by their superiors. Five former officers have

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# Merchants in Iran strike to block 70% tax hike

BY CINDY JAQUITH

A strike by Iranian merchants has forced the government to back down on a plan to raise their taxes by up to 70 percent. The action points up divisions among the capitalist rulers over how to cope with the deteriorating condition of Iran's economy.

Textile, jewelry, and carpet merchants in Tehran, where the most important bazaar is located, began the strike July 6. Then shops started closing down in other major cities, such as Tabriz, Isfahan, Mashhad, and Hamadan.

Some businesspeople in Tehran donned black armbands and demonstrated, AP reported.

To diffuse the situation President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad suddenly declared July 11 and 12 would be national holidays, saying this was to conserve energy.

The merchants association, in negotiations with the government, won a reduction of the tax increase to 15 percent, although some traders pointed out that with a 10 percent hike already in effect, the actual increase is 25 percent. The *New York Times* reported that as of July 18, all shops in Tehran were open.

During a previous merchants' strike in 2008, Ahmadinejad was also forced to yield after trying unsuccessfully to impose a sales tax.

The merchants' action comes as the effects of the world capitalist economic crisis deepen in Iran. An article in the July 12 *Financial Times* of London reported that from March to May one of every eight checks written in Iran bounced, according to the Central Bank. Bank

Melli said its overdue debts are nearly \$46 billion, 860 percent higher than in 2005. The Iran Chamber of Commerce reported industries are working at only 40 percent of capacity. Unemployment is estimated at 25 percent, with many more underemployed.

Big merchants have been supportive of the capitalist governments that have been in power since the 1979 revolution in Iran, but many find themselves increasingly in disagreement with Ahmadinejad's policies. Faced with a sharp drop in oil income and the effects of years of economic sanctions by imperialist powers, his administration has moved to raise funds by increasing taxes, among other means. The economic sanctions imposed on Iran make foreign enterprises wary of trading with Iranians and imports and exports more expensive.

A jeweler on strike in the bazaar told the *Times* that he blamed Ahmadinejad's foreign policy for some of the economic problems. "When the government was opening anti-imperialism funds in Nicaragua and Venezuela with our money it should have thought about such rainy days when oil prices fall and it faces budget deficits."

Others interviewed by the *Times* ex-



Carpet merchants in Tabriz bazaar. Strike there and in other large cities forced government to back down on steep tax increase imposed as Iranian economy deteriorates.

pressed resentment with the growing economic power of enterprises owned by the Pasdaran, the military force that is increasingly influential in the government. The merchants have traditionally been aligned with the clerical hierarchy.

Hossein Noqrehkar Shirazi, deputy oil minister, said in an interview with the Iranian news agency Khabar Online that Iran is selling oil at a discount to attract buyers. Sales are slowed by the difficulty getting around bank sanctions. Production has become more expensive.

Meanwhile, the September deadline for starting to lift government subsidies on basic goods is approaching. These subsidies—covering fuel, water, flour, bread, wheat, rice, milk, sugar, and transportation—were won after the 1979 revolution, qualitatively improving workers' conditions. The parliament passed legislation last year to phase them out. Iranians with the lowest incomes are supposed to receive cash to cope with the increase in prices. The parliamentary research office estimates prices could go up as much as 60 percent.

## Judge increases Lynne Stewart sentence to 10 years

BY SETH GALINSKY

NEW YORK—A judge increased the 28-month jail sentence of Lynne Stewart, a defense attorney who often accepted unpopular cases and defended working people who could not afford a

lawyer, to 10 years on July 15.

The charges were brought against Stewart for her work as one of the lawyers for Sheik Omar Abdel-Rahman, a blind Muslim cleric who was found guilty on frame-up charges of "seditious conspiracy" for allegedly plotting to blow up the United Nations headquarters and other structures. No physical evidence linking Abdel-Rahman to any crime was presented during his trial.

Abdel-Rahman was sentenced to life in prison. U.S. officials also imposed a draconian ban, prohibiting him from most communications with people outside the prison. His lawyers were required to agree to abide by these Special Administrative Measures.

Stewart, 70, began serving the original sentence November 19 after losing appeals of her conviction on frame-up

charges of "conspiracy to provide material aid to terrorist activity" for releasing a press statement on behalf of Abdel-Rahman to Reuters in 2000.

A federal appeals court ruled that the sentence imposed by Judge John Koeltl in 2005 was too light, instructing Koeltl to resentence her.

In his ruling Koeltl said that Stewart's statements after the first sentencing indicated a "lack of remorse."

A headline in a New York *Daily News* editorial July 16 gloated, "Right where she belongs." The paper said that the sentence "still let her off way too easy."

"I'm somewhat stunned by the swift change in my outlook," Stewart told the judge. "We will continue to struggle on, and we will take, of course, all available options to do what we need to do to change this."

### THE MILITANT

*Legalize undocumented immigrants now!*

*Under the Obama administration E-Verify checks of employees' immigration status, fingerprinting of prisoners to determine their status, and immigration audits of factory payrolls have all expanded. Follow the fight against attacks on immigrant rights in the 'Militant.'*



Youth demonstrate April 23 in Phoenix against anti-immigrant law.

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### The Militant

Vol. 74/No. 29

Closing news date: July 21, 2010

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Published weekly except for one week in January and one week in July.

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Website: www.themilitant.com

Correspondence concerning subscriptions or changes of address should be addressed to the Militant, 306 W. 37th Street, 10th floor, New York, NY 10018.

Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to the Militant, 306 W. 37th Street, 10th floor, New York, NY 10018.

SUBSCRIPTIONS: United States: For one year send \$35 to above address.

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# Workers need a labor party, says D.C. socialist

BY SUSAN LAMONT

WASHINGTON—“Thanks for coming to our picket line! Thanks for supporting us. Good luck!” These were some of the comments from nurses walking an early morning informational picket line outside the Washington Hospital Center July 19, as they greeted Omari Musa, Socialist Workers Party candidate for mayor of Washington.

Musa was there in solidarity and to discuss his party’s platform with the nurses. Among the points he stressed is the need for workers to build their own party, a labor party based on a fighting union movement.

Dozens of members of Nurses United, wearing bright purple T-shirts, picketed in front of three entrances to the sprawling hospital complex during the morning rush hour.

“The nurses at the Washington Hospital Center deserve the support of unionists and other workers throughout the D.C. area. They are setting an example,” said Musa.

Some 1,600 members of Nurses United have been fighting for a new contract since April. On June 28 they voted by 98 percent to reject the hospital’s latest contract offer, which includes cuts in wages and benefits totaling thousands of dollars a year, including elimination of weekend and shift differentials. The nurses are also demanding improvements in patient care and staffing levels.

“Lack of medical care is a growing crisis for workers in the District, as in every other part of the country,” Musa said. “Under the capitalist system, ‘health care’ is a profit-making business. Every year hospital owners and pharmaceutical companies make millions, while more and more working people can’t afford to visit a doctor or get medicine.”

“A week ago, United Medical Cen-

ter—the only hospital in Washington east of the Anacostia River—threatened to close for lack of funds,” continued Musa. “This hospital serves part of the city that is predominantly Black, with the highest unemployment rate and greatest medical needs. The socialist campaign demands an end to hospital closures. No one should be denied access to preventative, chronic, or emergency care for lack of funds.”

Volunteers for the socialist campaign are gathering the signatures required to place Musa’s name on the ballot for the November election. Petitioning began July 20, with the biggest teams going out the weekends of July 24–25 and July 31–August 1. Volunteers will gather 5,000 signatures, well over the requirement of 3,000.

“The economic crisis deeply affecting working people must be answered with a fight to take political power out of the hands of the capitalist rulers, who profit off of inequality and lowering standards of living,” Musa said. “To begin that fight workers have to support



Militant/Chris Hoepfner

**Omari Musa, Socialist Workers Party candidate for mayor of Washington, D.C., joins picket line of nurses fighting for contract at Washington Hospital Center.**

battles like the nurses’, and set out on an independent road in politics, breaking from the Democrats and Republicans, the bosses’ parties, and toward building our own labor party.”

The Socialist Workers Party is also running Glova Scott for delegate to the U.S. House of Representatives and Paul Pederson for D.C. City Council Chairman.

## UK rulers aim at workers’ living standards

BY PAUL DAVIES

LONDON—The new Conservative–Liberal Democrat coalition government announced an emergency budget in late June. It promised a “spending review” in October that will mark a further stage in the government’s efforts to off-load the capitalist crisis onto the backs of working people.

George Osborne, chancellor of the exchequer and a Conservative, urged support for the budget’s tax increases, a freeze on public-sector pay and child benefits, and limited access to housing benefits.

Osborne also announced future reductions in the rate at which social benefits rise, by changing the way benefit increases are calculated. In a concession to Liberal Democrat coalition partners, who face pressure from their ranks, the budget increases the threshold at which income tax is paid. More than 600,000 households will lose an average of £1,000 per year in housing benefits, according to the Chartered Institute for Housing (£1=US\$1.50).

The Institute for Fiscal Studies said the United Kingdom faces the “longest, deepest, sustained period of cuts to public services spending at least since World War II.”

Reflecting concern that the government’s projections were insufficient to turn around the crisis, Ian King in *The Times* noted that Osborne’s “problem is that plenty of things could blow this off course, not least the continued economic problems in the eurozone, Britain’s biggest trading partner.” The signs of a further downturn in the U.S. economy will inevitably impact on Europe. Britain’s bosses face not only a widening trade deficit with the rest of the world, but also a sharp decline in already relatively low productivity through the recession.

Some commentators in the big-business press complained that cuts in the social wage had not gone far enough. The new government has inherited the second largest budget deficit in Europe. Calling the cuts “modest,” *The Sunday Times* complained that the government

had chosen “the line of least resistance” and “has too easily accepted that the NHS [National Health Service] leviathan cannot be touched.” Instead, the paper said, Osborne should have ended universal access to child benefits and pensioners’ access to winter fuel allowances. Former Conservative minister Norman Tebbit urged the government to ensure “there is no backsliding” by its Liberal Democrat allies.

### No room for maneuver

Meanwhile, others are concerned that the cuts will impact the very fragile economy, as short-term interest rates are already at the historically low level of 0.5 percent—leaving no room for maneuver. The UK economy declined 6.4 percent from the second quarter of 2008 to the third quarter of 2009. Writing in the *Financial Times* June 18, columnist Samuel Brittan said, “[Prime Minister] David Cameron and George Osborne are behaving like owners of a whelk stall rather than economic managers of a nation with its own currency.”

Unease over the government’s course reflects the crisis of bourgeois leadership in the face of challenges before the UK capitalist class. Bank lending, key to economic recovery, remains negative—that is, more money is being paid back to the banks than they’re lending out.

The British government’s course also marks a divergence with the Barack Obama administration. In a letter to G-20 leaders Obama noted that in the past “stimulus was too quickly withdrawn and resulted in renewed hardships and recession.”

This has been the thrust of the Labour Party in opposition as it was during the election campaign. Labour has concentrated its fire on the Liberal Democrats, calling for their members of Parliament (MP) to vote against cuts that they said they opposed when they were in opposition. But while still in government, then-Labour chancellor of the exchequer Alistair Darling had already projected the deepest cuts since the 1950s.

Figures released in mid-June reveal a glimpse of the escalating impact of unemployment—with the numbers classified as “economically inactive” reaching a record high. Official figures now claim a 7.9 percent unemployment rate. The numbers out of work for more than a year increased by 85,000, while unemployment for 16 to 24-year-olds rose to just under a million.

The number of people forced to work part-time because they can’t get full-time work has risen to more than a million. Workers’ real incomes are being hit hard with pay rises averaging only 1.9 percent while retail price inflation has gone over 5 percent. Fuel costs rose 25 percent over the past year. Those declared insolvent, or bankrupt, hit a record high in the first three months of 2010.

Some leaders of trade unions, in particular in the public sector, have talked about protest action, but their “restraint” has won the praise of the government’s business secretary, Liberal Democrat Vincent Cable. “Many of the unions deserve a lot of credit,” he told *The Times*. “One of the miracles of this crisis . . . is that people have taken pay cuts and part-time working and the unions very often have cooperated with management to see this happen.”

Speeches by labor leaders at the Durham Miners Gala July 10 did little to counter that judgment. Condemning “high octane,” “unfettered” capitalism and calling for a government that would expand entitlements, they urged workers to look to the next general elections some five years away for change.

Labour MP Jeremy Corbyn and former London mayor Ken Livingstone harked back to the post–World War II Labour government that enacted the NHS, council house building, and the welfare state. Livingstone called this “the most important advance in history.” David Guy of the National Union of Mineworkers said the next general election would be the “day of reckoning.”

*Jonathan Silberman and Pete Clifford contributed to this article.*

## MILITANT LABOR FORUMS

### CALIFORNIA

#### Los Angeles

**Korea Is One! The Fight for Reunification.** Speaker: Arlene Rubinstein, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., July 30, 7:30 p.m. 4025 S. Western Ave. Tel.: (323) 295-2600.

#### San Francisco

**Afghanistan, Washington’s Longest War: U.S./NATO Out Now!** Speaker: Eric Simpson, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., July 30, 7:30 p.m. 5482 Mission St. Tel.: (415) 584-2135.

### NEW YORK

#### Manhattan

**Black Liberation and the Fight for Working-Class Independent Political Action Today.** Speaker: Steve Clark, Socialist Workers Party National Committee and editor, *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power*. Fri., July 30, 8 p.m. 307 W. 36th St. (near 8th Ave.) 10th Floor. Tel.: (212) 736-2540.

## CALENDAR

### NEW YORK

#### Manhattan

**Celebrate Opening New Location of Casa de las Américas and the 57th Anniversary of the Attack on the Moncada Barracks in Cuba.** Guest speaker: Cuban ambassador to the United Nations. Music, food, art. 3 p.m. – 8 p.m. Donation: \$20. 182 E. 111th St. (between Third Ave. and Lexington).



# N.Y. ballot drive over top

Continued from front page

their first socialist event. A successful meeting to launch the ballot effort was also held the first weekend.

In addition to collecting more than 7,200 signatures, campaign supporters over the 10 days introduced people to the new book *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power* by Jack Barnes, published by Pathfinder Press, and to the *Militant* newspaper. Thirty-one copies of the book and 38 subscriptions to the *Militant* were sold during the petitioning effort. This included 11 copies of the books and 10 subscriptions sold on Saturday, July 17, at the Harlem Book Fair. SWP candidates and supporters campaigned at the fair, and throughout Upper Manhattan, collecting 1,525 signatures that day.

A booth featuring Pathfinder's titles was one of some 125 set up by bookstores, distributors, authors, or publishers at the fair. Many visitors also attended panel discussions at the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture and other locations. A panel entitled "Is Racial Justice Passé? Barack Obama, American Society, and Human Rights in the 21st Century" featured five professors and authors of recent books, as well as Steve Clark, coeditor of *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power*.

## Good response in Harlem

Petitioners for Calero reached out to working people with a fighting perspective to defend the interests of the working class, to break politically from the imperialist Democratic and Republican parties, and to build a revolutionary movement to take political power out of the hands of the capitalist exploiters.

Campaign supporters received a good response in the district, which includes the Upper Manhattan neighborhoods of Harlem, East Harlem, Washington Heights, and Inwood. In the final week of the drive, campaigners gathered signatures both before and after work—collecting close to 900 by the weekend. A young worker who met socialists at an immigrant rights rally May 1 and a woman electrician who learned about the campaign from a coworker joined the petitioning effort.

Many working people, when approached in the final week by SWP candidates and supporters, said, "I've already signed." Thousands of copies of the party's campaign platform in English and Spanish were distributed.

Petitioner Harry D'Agostino said he found real interest among workers in the Socialist Workers campaign. "The idea that working people need to take political power often got people to stop," he said. D'Agostino, who petitioned seven of the 10 days, said he was able to sell a number of copies of the *Militant* by pointing to the struggles it covers in the United States and around the world, and explaining how workers can learn from each other's fights.

Socialist candidates and campaigners staffing the booth at the Harlem Book Fair had nonstop conversations about U.S. and world politics. The booth prominently featured *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power*, sparking discussion on lessons to be learned from Malcolm X and the role of workers and farmers who are Black throughout a century and a half of class struggle going back to the Civil War and Radical Reconstruction. More than \$500 of Pathfinder books and pamphlets were sold.

## 'Is Racial Justice Passé?'

Some 125 people attended the session on "Is Racial Justice Passé?" Reverend Herbert Daughtry, national presiding minister of the House of the Lord churches, was the moderator. Daughtry read passages from his book *In My Lifetime: Towards the Presidency of Barack Obama*, pointing to the election of Obama as a "great achievement" that "will reap benefits" for generations.

"Barack Obama and the Democratic Party administration he represents do not in any way represent the interests of the big majority of working people who are Black and other working people," said Clark in his presentation. The deepening global economic and social crisis today shows the consequences of the fact that "we live under the dictatorship of capital," he said. "We need to break politically from the Democratic and Republican parties and organize our own party



Militant/Dan Fein

Campaign supporter collects signatures in Harlem July 10 to put Róger Calero, Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. Congress in 15th District, on ballot.

independent of those who exploit and oppress us."

After the presentations panelists were available to autograph copies of their books. One participant who asked Clark to sign a copy of *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power* was from Columbus, Ohio. She has watched Harlem book fairs on C-SPAN, she said, but decided this year to attend.

In addition to the panel on "Is Racial Justice Passé?" there were panels on "American Stories: Creating Life against Resistance" and "Can We Tell the Truth about the Black Past?" Each was televised live on C-SPAN's Book TV, and videos are available online at C-SPAN's Web site.

Some visitors to the Pathfinder booth said they heard about *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power* at the panel discussion and wanted to know more.

A woman who is a teacher in upstate New York bought the book and, after asking about its author Jack Barnes, also became interested

in another title by him, *The Working Class and the Transformation of Learning: The Fraud of Education Reform under Capitalism*. "I've been a teacher for some 20 years," she said. "But what they organize us to do in the classroom isn't *education*, aimed at encouraging students to think for themselves. It's just *training*."

## Socialist campaign meeting

At the campaign dinner and forum that evening, Ruth Robinett explained the importance of the conviction of Johannes Mehserle, a Bay Area transit cop, for killing Oscar Grant, a young Black man, last year, as well as the indictments of four New Orleans cops for killings in the wake of Hurricane Katrina in 2005. "The police are used to protect the ruling class and private property," Robinett said. "A conviction of a cop is rare and important."

Róger Calero told the audience, "The White House and Democrats in Congress, including my opponent Charles Rangel, are telling us the so-

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## 'It was essentially a bribe to vote up the contract'

"It was essentially a bribe to vote up the contract," wrote Naomi Craine in a note along with a check she sent for \$862 for the Capital Fund, which raises money for the long-term publishing projects of the communist movement.

The money Craine sent is from a settlement between the United Food and Commercial Workers union and Farmer John, a pork slaughterhouse in Los Angeles, for years of not paying workers for the time needed to put on, remove, and clean their smocks, protective equipment, and tools.

"The blood-money character of this settlement is highlighted by the way it came on the eve of the company and union officials pushing through a lousy contract—six years with total raises of \$2; some workers in higher tiers getting no raises, instead lump sums; and increases in health costs," Craine wrote.

Class-conscious workers refer to these bribes as blood money because the bosses use them to buy workers' silence over speedup, low pay, long hours, and unsafe conditions. The communist movement has a proud tradition of not accepting such bribes.

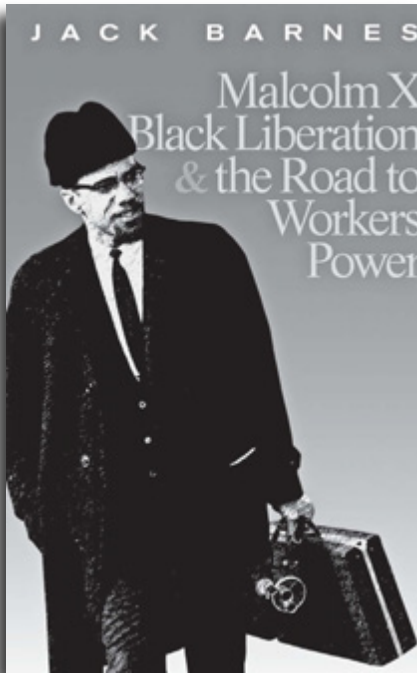
Vivian Sahner in Atlanta sent in a blood money check of \$2,274. "Each year we get a little slice of the money made, to try to get us on board to work harder in the next year," her note said. "I'm glad to see it go to a good purpose." Sahner, who works as a customer service representative, said this bribe is a small pittance aimed at convincing workers they have a stake in the company. Meanwhile, the bosses have imposed a wage freeze and increased the amount workers have to pay for health coverage.

—CINDY JAQUITH

## Special offer

### Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power

by Jack Barnes



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Available for only \$15 or for \$10 with *Militant* subscription from one of the distributors listed on page 8.

PathfinderPress.com



# Coke plant explosion in Pennsylvania injures 20

BY SETH GALINSKY

Twenty people were injured in a July 14 explosion at the U.S. Steel coke plant in Clairton, Pennsylvania. Three workers are in critical condition with severe burns.

Brian Doyle, one of the injured workers, told the press that the alarm went off on his gas detector indicating dangerous levels before the blast, but his crew kept trying to seal the pipe they were working on. He said the explosion picked him up and blew him across the floor.

Less than a year ago an explosion in the plant killed a worker for a pipe installation contractor.

The Clairton Coke Works is the biggest coke manufacturing facility in the United States. Some 1,500 workers produce an annual 4.7 million tons of coke—coal baked at high temperature to remove impurities for making steel.

In spite of U.S. Steel's long history of safety violations at the plant, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) has a record of imposing only paltry fines for violations. OSHA fined the company \$2,600 in 2005 for hazardous conditions. In 2006 the agency fined the company just \$7,000 when a worker lost both legs after being struck by equipment.

The United Steelworkers union, which organizes most of the workers at the Clairton plant, is sending a team to investigate the July 14 ex-

plosion. Steelworkers union spokesperson Gerald Dickey downplayed the company's responsibility in an early statement. "There's no reason for us to believe it was a dangerous place to work," he told the *Wall Street Journal*. "Steelmaking is a dangerous business. There's going to be situations that happen."

OSHA issued a statement just hours after the explosion asserting that the blast that day and the one in 2009 "occurred in two separate areas of the plant and are unrelated." The agency said that it did not issue citations or fine U.S. Steel for the 2009 incident "because plant employees were not exposed to any hazards."

Maureen Revetta, whose husband Nicholas was killed in the 2009 blast, criticized OSHA for closing that in-



U.S. Steel's coke plant in Clairton, Pennsylvania, where blast recently injured 20 workers, has long record of unsafe practices, but government safety agency has levied only small fines against company. One worker died there in an explosion less than a year ago.

vestigation without determining the cause. "How could someone who is supposed to be protecting the safety of workers tell me that?" she said to the *Pittsburgh Tribune-Review*.

Expressing her support for the new-

ly injured workers Revetta told WPIX TV that she thought OSHA's job is "to provide an explanation as to what happened and to make the workplace safe for the men that have to go there every day."

## Massachusetts grocery workers end strike

BY SARAH ULLMAN

BOSTON—Members of United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) Local 791 approved a new contract with Shaw's Supermarkets July 8 and ended their four-month strike of the Perishable Goods Distribution Warehouse in Methuen, Massachusetts. The vote was 171-37 in favor.

The warehouse distributes meat, dairy, and produce to the 176 Shaw's Supermarkets and Star Markets in New England. The grocery chain's parent

company, Supervalu of St. Paul, Minnesota, is one of the largest grocery companies in the country.

Company officials say former strikers will return to work in phases over the next couple of weeks. Unionists report all replacement workers have been terminated, while the more than 50 union members who crossed the picket line will continue to work.

In a telephone interview July 18, striker Christian Ovallos said, "We won the war." With eight years at the company, he expects to return to work in a week or two.

The workers voted to strike March 7, rejecting a contract that would have increased health-care costs by \$28 per week for those with family coverage. As soon as the vote was taken, the company substituted an offer with greater concession demands, including converting 24 jobs to nonunion subcontractor positions. Shortly after the strike began the company hired replacement workers and cancelled the strikers' health insurance. Strikers won unemployment benefits at the beginning of May.

A 60-mile march over five days in late May, from the struck facility near the New Hampshire border to downtown Boston, won the support for the strike

and was covered in the media. Ten state congressional members and 80 religious leaders urged Shaw's to negotiate with the union.

The union organized 150 strikers to picket the warehouse June 30 from midnight to 3:00 a.m., when the largest number of trucks make deliveries. Strikers blocked the road, at one point preventing more than half a dozen tractor trailers from entering the warehouse.

According to picket captain Ruben Benitez, "the police were angry with the union because they didn't notify them; there were only two cops." Six union members were arrested.

The following week negotiations led to the mediator-recommended settlement. Neither the company nor the union are providing details, but Ovallos says the health-care contribution is less than before.

Other former strikers report raises over the four-year contract will be 20 cents the first year and 20 cents each of the last two years, roughly similar to the original offer. There will be a \$750 bonus in 2011.

A concession was made to allow some 30 to 40 receiving-dock jobs go to a third-party contractor, while the warehouse remains all union.

## Arizona immigrant deaths

Continued from front page

Republic July 19 Napolitano said that starting August 1, additional National Guard troops would begin their border deployment. At the same time Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) is opening a new office in Ajo, Arizona, and a Border Enforcement Security Task Force Jump Team will start working out of Douglas.

Homeland Security is also sending "mobile surveillance systems, thermal-imaging binocular units, and trucks equipped with detection scopes, as well as observation and utility aircraft" to the Tucson area, she said. Earlier in the week, Napolitano awarded \$14 million in grants to help the Arizona government pay for its cop actions along the border.

The announcement of the stepped up measures was made on the eve of Arizona's new anti-immigrant law taking effect.

While Napolitano says that ICE's priority is going after "criminal aliens,"

"felony fugitives," and "gang members," in a July 15 interview with Fox News she explained "we will proceed" against anyone "we come across" who is in the country without papers.

Sandra Punin, 22, is an example, of working people they "come across." She was in a minor fender bender in Long Island, New York, June 14. The cop who wrote Punin a ticket arrested her after finding that she missed an appearance before an immigration judge in 2006, when she was 17. Punin was turned over to ICE and is now in an immigration jail facing deportation proceedings.

## 25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



August 2, 1985

PITTSBURGH—On July 21, 8,200 workers at Wheeling Pittsburgh Steel Corp. rejected a company plan to cut wages and benefits by 18 percent. Workers walked out at eight plants in Pennsylvania, West Virginia and Ohio. Members of the United Steelworkers of America (USWA) took to the picket line in a fight to save their union and their jobs.

Wheeling Pittsburgh, the seventh largest and most modern steel producer in the United States, filed bankruptcy in April, citing labor costs as the primary reason. The real intentions of the bosses became clear this month when the company appealed to federal bankruptcy Judge Warren Bentz for permission to tear up the union contract.



August 1, 1960

LOS ANGELES, July 10—Close to 5,000 people marched today in the NAACP-sponsored plea to the Democratic convention for action on civil rights.

The march proceeded from the Shrine Auditorium to the Sports Arena, site of the Democratic convention, where Rev. Martin Luther King led a rally and a 24-hour vigil of youth picketers was set up.

Large groups of white and Negro students from local and West Coast colleges ranging from San Bernardino College in Southern California to Reed College in Oregon participated. Many had previously demonstrated against the Chessman execution, supported the Southern sit-ins, and engaged in actions against the House Un-American Committee.



August 10, 1935

ST. LOUIS, Mo.—What promises to be the most sensational strike of the year for the Middle West is the action of the brutally exploited "tiff" miners of Washington Co., Missouri, which has just begun.

"Tiff" is the colloquial appellation given to a mineral, the trade name of which is barytes. It is used extensively in the manufacture of paint and other lead products.

The strike is a protest against wage and living conditions always low but which with the recent rise in prices of foodstuffs are no longer tolerable.

These grim, determined men of the Ozarks are fighting not merely for an increased standard of living; they are fighting for life itself.

### The Changing Face of U.S. Politics Working-Class Politics and the Trade Unions

By Jack Barnes

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# What lies behind China economic ‘miracle’

(First in a series)

BY DOUG NELSON

Over the last three decades, the Chinese government has increasingly employed capitalist methods. This course has led to a rapid expansion of China’s economy at the expense of working people and set uncontrollable forces in motion that will have profound consequences for the class struggle there and worldwide.

China’s economic growth, often referred to as a “miracle,” has inspired a number of myths. One common view is that this economic miracle might provide some road out of the world capitalist depression.

Far from acting as a counterweight or being immune to the worldwide capitalist economic crisis, however, China’s “market socialist” economy is quite vulnerable to the unfolding depression in Europe and the United States. The size of the Chinese economy and the depth of its integration into world capitalist trade and finance also mean that what happens in China will in turn impact the rest of the world. The working class in China will be a significant actor in these developments.

In looking at where the economy and class struggle in China is headed today, it is useful to review the origins of the government’s current course.

The Chinese government began a shift from centralized state planning toward an expanding use of capitalist methods in the late 1970s. While these new economic policies were quite different from those of the past, they represented a continuation of an anti-working-class trajectory pursued by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) since it was brought to power by the mass revolutionary upsurge of the toilers that overthrew the imperialist-backed government of Chiang Kai-shek in 1949.

In power, the Communist Party’s domestic and foreign policy has served the interests of a privileged layer rooted in the government bureaucracy and administrative apparatus. These narrow interests have sharply conflicted with those of the workers and peasants.

The reactionary outlook of the CCP leadership predates the revolution. In the 1920s a counterrevolutionary faction in the Soviet Union, headed by Joseph Stalin, consolidated its grip on the Soviet party and carried out a murderous purge of its revolutionary leadership. The degeneration of the Communist Party in the Soviet Union, along with most of the international communist movement that looked to it, deeply impacted the young CCP.

The Stalinist leadership in Moscow played a key role in the defeat of the Chinese revolution of 1925–27 and aided the consolidation of power by those in the Chinese Communist party who shared similar political perspectives. Mao Zedong, the principal leader of this tendency, would come to head the party and, after the revolution, the Chinese government.

After coming to power in 1949, the Mao leadership had no intention of uprooting capitalism. But over the next few years, under threat of imperialist invasion, mass mobilizations of the toilers spread from the countryside to the cities. This resulted in the expropriation of land, industry, transport, banking, and trade from foreign and domestic capitalists and landlords and the establishment of a unified nation. The economy came under the direction of the state and the capitalist market was replaced with centralized planning of production and distribution.

The unleashing of productive capacities of workers and peasants during the first decade resulted in rapid industrial development. This laid the basis for a dramatic rise in the cultural level and living conditions of the population. Social gains included the expansion of education and medical care.

## Stifling toilers initiative

But the Communist Party government moved to stifle the toilers’ initiative, confidence, and solidarity as it sought to administer workers, whom it treated as mere economic inputs, rather than lead the working class to take control of state property. Recognizing the toilers’ aspirations as a threat to their growing privilege, the bureaucrats blocked workers’ involvement in politics and management.

Along these lines, bureaucratic and adventurous economic policies, such as forced collectivization of farms, were initiated in the mid-1950s. Aimed at boosting output on the backs of working people, while undermining involvement of workers and peasants in the organization of production, they were economic and political disasters. This course, and its accompanying repressive methods, ran counter to the building of socialism. Among the consequences, it undermined the political basis on which an economy based on proletarian state property could advance.

The economic and political consequences of these policies and the death of Mao in 1976 opened the door for a new faction, which sought to employ some capitalist economic methods, to consolidate control over the party.

The move toward capitalist methods was pushed under the rubric of spur-



Shenzhen city on the southwest coast of China. One of five “special economic zones” established in 1980 to attract direct foreign investment by the Chinese government. It has grown from a fishing town of 30,000 to a major industrialized port city of 9 million.

ring economic growth. “Whether a cat is black or white makes no difference. As long as it catches mice, it’s a good cat,” coined in 1961 by Deng Xiaoping, a leader of this party faction, became a well-known catchphrase to justify this course.

The first significant steps toward unleashing the chaotic forces that drive the capitalist market began with decisions of the CCP Central Committee in December 1978. That plenum enacted a policy to encourage the growth of small private businesses.

At the time of the 1978 plenum, a total of about 150,000 self-employed household businesses existed in urban areas throughout the country. In the 1980s private companies with more than the legal limit of seven employees began to appear. These were recognized and designated as “private enterprises” by the government in 1988. That year some 6.5 million people were privately employed in urban businesses. By the late 1990s, this figure reached more than 30 million.

The government moved in the early 1980s to break up the communes and lease land rights to farmers for 15-year periods. Later the maximum lease period was extended to 30 years, then to 70 years in 2008.

Prices controls were relaxed and agricultural markets were opened for farmers to sell a growing portion of their produce at market prices for profit. Unpredictable fluctuations in the weather or market prices meant that some farmers could become wealthy, while others were devastated. Class differentiation accelerated in the countryside.

The lifting of price controls was extended to manufactured goods. By 1988 more than half the value of retail goods were sold at market prices.

Manufacturing firms in the rural areas controlled by small village and township governments began to expand. Unlike state-owned enterprises, they operated on market principles separate from the planned economy, retaining after-tax profits, or absorbing losses. Most of the profits were to be either reinvested or used for public expenditures, providing the main source of social spending in rural areas neglected by the central government. Along with the breakup of the communes, in 1984 the government began to encourage the growth of these entities, designating them as “township and village enterprises” (TVE).

The number of people employed in TVEs rose from 30 million in 1980 to 95 million people in 1988. In the 1990s the TVEs were increasingly leased, mortgaged, or sometimes sold to private parties.

Officially recognized private enterprises began to spread in the rural areas in the 1990s. By 1999 there were 48 million people employed in private businesses, nearly 10 million of whom worked in “private enterprises” with more than seven workers.

In 1984 the practice, common in TVEs, of paying bonuses tied to productivity or allowing companies to retain “excess profits” began to be extended in various forms to state-owned enterprises. Government functionaries in positions of management were increasingly enticed by new possibilities for personal gain to wring as much value as possible from workers’ labor.

## ‘Special economic zones’

In 1980 Beijing established four cities along the southeast coast as “special economic zones.” The areas were opened to foreign investment and authority was handed over to local governments, who offered tax incentives for foreign investment in industry, as well as real estate and other sectors.

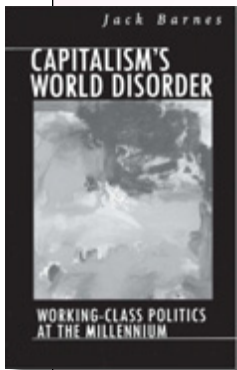
Capitalist enterprises have been attracted above all by the competitive advantages of relatively low wages, as well as tax breaks and government control over trade unions. Some of these operations have been set up as joint ventures between foreign companies and state-owned enterprises, others are completely foreign-owned.

Between 1984 and 1992, the government established these measures in more than four dozen other cities, as well as the entire island province of Hainan.

The influx of foreign capital investment spurred rapid development and urbanization in areas of the country, particularly along the coast. During the first decade, many workers there, particularly those working in the new private ventures, gained higher wages and a higher standard of living.

The next article will follow the continuing evolution of the Chinese economy toward increasing use of capitalist methods in production, trade, and finance; its interconnections with world capitalism; the class polarization resulting from this course; and the development of the Chinese proletariat.

## Capitalism’s World Disorder WORKING-CLASS POLITICS AT THE MILLENNIUM



The social devastation and financial panic, coarsening of politics, cop brutality, and imperialist aggression—all are products not of something gone wrong with capitalism but of its lawful workings. Yet the future can be changed by the united struggle of workers and farmers increasingly conscious of their capacity to wage revolutionary struggles for state power and to transform the world.

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# Inquiry of U.S. massacres in Korean War halted

BY SETH GALINSKY

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Korea, which was charged with investigating “illegal massacres before and after the Korean War” and human rights violations in South Korea, decided to wrap up its work this year.

Since it was set up by former South Korean president Roh Moo-hyun in 2005, the commission documented 138 massacres of South Korean civilians by the U.S. military during the 1950–53 Korean War.

It oversaw the excavation of 13 mass graves and exhumed 2,000 remains of victims of South Korean government executions. Tens of thousands had already been massacred in the South by the U.S.-installed dictatorship two years *before* the start of the war. More than 100,000 were executed by the South Korean government and the U.S. military during the war.

The scale of the executions reflects the massive resistance Washington faced from workers and peasants who refused to accept the imperialists’ division of their country and the imposition of a regime in the South that defended the interests of capitalists and large landowners.

Even though 140 suspected mass grave sites are still unexplored, a new majority in the commission, appointed by President Lee Myung-bak, announced in mid-July that it would not extend the body’s term. According to the *New York Times*, the inquiry is being ended “to avoid antagonizing the United States.”

Lee Young-jo, the new truth commission chair, told the press that there is “not much more to be revealed.” He also halted distribution of the commission’s March 2009 English-language report, claiming it was poorly translated.

But families of those killed by the U.S.-backed regime or directly by U.S. forces have pressed for the inquiry to go on. “They have so far uncovered just a tip of the iceberg,” Oh Won-ruk, 70, leader of a national association of 80 survivor groups, told the *Times*. “The current conservative government wants to keep it all buried.”

The killings took place after Washington divided the Korean Peninsula, with collaboration of the Stalinist regime in Moscow, following World War II. After landing troops in 1945, the U.S. military command outlawed strikes, arrested supporters of a unified Korea, and installed the Syngman Rhee dictatorship. Meanwhile in the North, the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea was carrying out a land reform and passing legislation for labor rights and women’s equality.

## Suppression of 1948 uprising

On April 3, 2008, Ahn Byung Ook, former president of the truth commission, participated in a memorial service on Cheju Island. Tens of thousands of residents were massacred there when the South Korean military and police, with U.S. assistance, suppressed an April 1948 uprising by the island’s farmers and fishermen, who were armed mostly with swords, spears, and farm implements. The uprising grew out of protests against police brutality and upcoming

national elections, which were designed to legitimize the division of the country.

In June 1950 troops from North Korea crossed into the South and within three days gained control of Seoul, the South Korean capital. By early August they had pushed U.S. and South Korean troops out of the entire country except for a beachhead at the southeastern tip of the peninsula.

Washington, under cover of the United Nations, launched a brutal offensive and eventually regained control of the South. The executions continued with a vengeance in the towns and villages the U.S.-led forces captured during the war.

Although the Pentagon has tried to portray the killing of Korean civilians by the U.S. Army and Air Force during the war as an “unfortunate tragedy” caused by panicky soldiers acting without orders, documents discovered in the U.S. National Archives in 2006 show that this was official policy.

## Refugees ‘will be shot’

“If refugees do appear from north of US lines they will receive warning shots, and if they then persist in advancing they will be shot,” said a July 26, 1950, letter from John Muccio, U.S. ambassador to South Korea, reporting on decisions made by U.S. commanders the day before. The letter was written on the first day of a



UN Photo

Students at class, Oct. 1, 1950, on remains of school in Eum Pyung, north of Seoul, destroyed by artillery fire. U.S. military destroyed much of Seoul when it retook South Korea from forces fighting to remove U.S.-imposed government in the South and reunify country.

four-day slaughter of 400, mostly women and children, at No Gun Ri, 100 miles southeast of Seoul, by U.S. Army troops and Air Force planes.

The truth commission reviewed 138 massacres carried out by U.S. forces, but under its new leadership the commission is recommending that in most cases compensation from Washington not be pursued because they say they were the result of “military necessity.”

While the truth commission’s work focused on killings that took place in the South, Washington pursued a scorched-earth policy during the war that leveled almost every building in North Korea,

as well as much of the South, in a fruitless attempt to crush the resistance of Korean workers and peasants.

Some 3 million Korean civilians, half a million North Korean soldiers, hundreds of thousands of Chinese volunteers who helped fight the U.S. occupation, as well as 100,000 South Korean and UN soldiers, including 54,000 from the United States, were killed during the war.

The truth commission also investigated killings, torture, and frame-ups carried out by subsequent U.S.-backed military regimes in South Korea up until the early 1990s.

# New York socialists campaign in Harlem

Continued from page 4

called economic stimulus is working and that the economy is going in the right direction.”

“They tell us all we need to do is be patient,” Calero said. “But the landlords are not being patient when they throw people out of their apartments. Con Ed is not patient when the electricity is cut off. The doctors are not patient when the health insurance is canceled.”

“The economic crisis is the result of the capitalist system of exploitation and will continue until we get rid of the dictatorship of capital once and for all,” continued Calero. “That’s

why workers must break from the parties of finance capital, the Democrats and Republicans, and form an independent party of labor, based on a fighting trade union movement in the United States.”

## Back out campaigning

Calero, along with other Socialist Workers Party candidates and campaign supporters will be back out campaigning over the July 24–25 weekend and the months between now and the November elections. They will be distributing the campaign platform and selling copies of *Malcolm X*, *Black Liberation*, and *the Road to Workers*



Militant/Brian Williams

Pathfinder book table at Harlem Book Fair July 17. At left is SWP senatorial candidate Willie Cotton. At center with book is Steve Clark, coeditor of *Malcolm X*, *Black Liberation*, and *the Road to Workers Power*. Clark spoke at book fair panel on “Is Racial Justice Passé?”

*Power* and other books and pamphlets that patiently explain a revolutionary working-class alternative to the course of the capitalist candidates and parties.

On Saturday evening, July 24, campaign supporters will also be participating with others in “An Evening in Solidarity with Cuba” to celebrate the 57th anniversary of the July 26, 1953, assault on the Moncada army garrison in Santiago de Cuba. The attack, led by Fidel Castro and other Cuban rebels, launched the revolutionary war that toppled the U.S.-backed dictator Fulgencio Batista dictatorship in 1959.

A focus of the July 24 meeting will be the campaign to free the Cuban Five. Gerardo Hernández, Antonio Guerrero, Ramón Labañino, Fernando González, and René González have been in prison since their arrest on Sept. 12, 1998. They had been gathering information on counterrevolutionary Cuban American groups that operate from South Florida with Washington’s complicity and have a history of violent attacks on Cuba.

The five were framed and convicted in 2001 on charges that included failing to register as agents of a foreign government and “conspiracy to commit espionage.” They were given sentences ranging from 15 years to life. Hernández, who was also falsely accused of “conspiracy to commit murder,” was sentenced to two life terms plus 15 years.

Socialist candidates and their supporters are explaining the frame-up to working people everywhere they speak and actively campaigning with others to free the Cuban Five.



# How Cuban Revolution transformed workers' lives

*Below is an excerpt from To Speak the Truth: Why Washington's 'Cold War' against Cuba Doesn't End, by Fidel Castro and Che Guevara, one of Pathfinder's Books of the Month for July. In September 1960, Castro addressed the UN General Assembly. Parts of his speech are printed below. This period marked a turning point for the Cuban Revolution. Tens of thousands of working people were occupying fields and factories and mobilizing in the streets as property of imperialist-owned banks and industries in Cuba along with the largest holdings of Cuba's capitalist owners were nationalized, becoming the property of the Cuban people. Copyright © 1992 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.*

## BOOKS OF THE MONTH

### BY FIDEL CASTRO

When the revolution came to power, what did it find? What “marvels” did the revolution find when it came to power in Cuba? First of all, the revolution found that 600,000 Cubans, able and ready to work, were unemployed—as many, proportionally, as were jobless in the United States during the Great Depression that shook this country, and which almost produced a catastrophe here. This is what we confronted in my country—permanent unemployment. Three million out of a population of a



Bohemia

**March in Havana August 1960 with symbolic burial of coffins representing U.S.-owned companies nationalized by the revolution.**

little more than six million had no electricity, possessing none of its advantages and comforts. Three and a half million out of a total population of a little more than six million lived in huts, in shacks, and in slums, without the most minimal sanitary facilities. In the cities, rents took almost one-third of family income. Electricity rates and rents were among the highest in the world.

Some 37.5 percent of our population were illiterate; 70 percent of the rural children lacked teachers; 2 percent of our population suffered from tuberculosis—that is to say, 100,000 persons out of a little more than six million. Ninety-five percent of the children in rural areas suffered from parasites. Infant mortality was astronomical. Life expectancy was very low. On the other hand, 85 percent of the small farmers were paying rent on their land of up to 30 percent of their gross income, while 1.5 percent of the landowners controlled 46 percent of the total area of the country. Of course, the proportion of hospital beds to the number of inhabitants was ridiculously low compared with countries that have even halfway decent medical services.

Public services, the electricity and telephone companies, all belonged to U.S. monopolies. A major portion of banking, importing, and oil refining; the majority of sugar production; the best land; and the most important industries in all fields in Cuba belonged to U.S. companies.

The balance of payments in the last

ten years, from 1950 to 1960, has been favorable to the United States vis-à-vis Cuba to the extent of \$1 billion. This is without taking into account the hundreds of millions of dollars extracted from the public treasury by the corrupt officials of the dictatorship and later deposited in U.S. or European banks. One billion dollars in ten years! This poor and underdeveloped Caribbean country with 600,000 unemployed was contributing to the economic development of the most economically developed country in the world!

This was the situation that confronted us. Yet it should not surprise many of the countries represented in this assembly. For what we have said about Cuba is but an X-ray view that could be applied to many of the countries represented here. . . .

The revolutionary government began to take its first steps. The first was a 50 percent reduction in rents paid by families. This was a very just measure since, as I said earlier, there were families paying up to one-third of their income for rent. The people had been the victims of housing speculation; urban real estate had also been subject to speculation, to the detriment of the entire Cuban people. But when the revolutionary government reduced rents by 50 percent, there were those who were considerably upset; yes, a few who owned the buildings and apartment houses were upset. But the people rushed into the streets rejoicing, as they would in any

country—even here in New York—if rents were reduced by 50 percent for all families. But it caused no problems with the monopolies. Some of the U.S. companies owned large buildings, but they were relatively few in number.

Then another law was passed, a law cancelling the concessions that had been granted by the Batista dictatorship to the telephone company, which was a U.S. monopoly. Aided by having a population without means to defend itself, valuable concessions had been obtained. The revolutionary government cancelled those concessions and reestablished the prices for telephone services that had existed previously. This was the first conflict with the U.S. monopolies.

The third measure was the reduction of electricity rates, which had been among the highest in the world. This led to the second conflict with the U.S. monopolies. Already they were beginning to paint us as Reds, simply because we had clashed with the interests of the U.S. monopolies.

Then came another law, an essential law, an inevitable law—inevitable for the Cuban people and inevitable, sooner or later, for all the peoples of the world, at least those who have not done so. This was the Agrarian Reform Law.<sup>1</sup> Naturally, everybody agrees with agrarian reform in theory. Nobody would dare to deny it; nobody except an ignoramus would dare to deny that agrarian reform in the underdeveloped countries of the world is one of the essential conditions for economic development.

1. In adopting the Agrarian Reform Law of May 17, 1959, the new revolutionary government made good on what had been one of the central promises of the July 26 Movement and Rebel Army. A limit of 30 *caballerías* (approximately 1,000 acres) was set on individual landholdings. Implementation of the law resulted in the confiscation of the vast estates and sugar plantations in Cuba—many of them owned by U.S. companies; this land passed into the hands of the new government. The law granted sharecroppers, tenant farmers, and squatters deeds to the land they tilled. A second agrarian reform law, enacted October 4, 1963, set a maximum limit on holdings of 167 acres.

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# Take the high ground—Free Cuban 5!

The Cuban government and Communist Party leaders Raúl Castro and Fidel Castro have again taken the political and moral high ground from Washington and the propertied families whose class interests it serves. Cuban leaders have announced the release of 52 prisoners, the last of 75 tried, convicted, and jailed in 2003.

“All will be released without exception, in coming weeks,” said Cuban National Assembly president Ricardo Alarcón in a July 20 interview with a Brazilian daily. According to the Spanish news agency EFE, Alarcón suggested other prisoners not convicted of violent crimes may also be released.

The Cuban leader answered the cynical misrepresentation of these individuals as “political prisoners” and “prisoners of conscience” by imperialist governments, the big business media, and “human rights” groups. They “are not dissidents” persecuted for their political views, Alarcón said. “They are persons charged with crimes and with working for foreign powers that want to destroy our country.” They had taken funds from the U.S. Interests Section in Havana.

As we go to press, 11 of these prisoners have been released and are already in Spain. Twenty others have agreed to fly directly from prison in Cuba to Spain.

According to supporters and family members of the prisoners, Madrid is withholding aid to help them find decent living quarters there. The wife of a prisoner still in Cuba said U.S. officials told her it “will not be possible for the prisoners to go directly” to the United States, and that entry applications would take time to process.

Meanwhile, in early July Washington carried out a swap with Moscow of 10 persons—all but one Russians by birth—who had been arrested in the United States and charged with being spies for Russia. The 10 were exchanged for four Russians jailed by Moscow on charges of spying for Washington.

Despite these developments, the U.S. rulers continue to hold behind bars—now for nearly 12 years—five Cuban revolutionaries: Gerardo Hernández, Antonio Guerrero, Ramón Labañino, Fernando González, and René González. Arrested by U.S. authorities in September 1998, they were framed up and convicted in 2001 on charges including failure to register as agents of a foreign government and “conspiracy to commit espionage.” They were given sentences ranging from 15 years to life. Hernández was also falsely accused of “conspiracy to commit murder” and sentenced to two life terms plus 15 years.

In truth, the five had been gathering information on counterrevolutionary Cuban-American groups that operate from South Florida with Washington’s complicity and have a history of violent assaults against the Cuban Revolution.

Now that the Cuban government is releasing the 52 remaining prisoners convicted in 2003, both the U.S. government and Cuban counterrevolutionaries are squealing like stuck pigs. This unforeseen blow to their “human rights” demagoguery and deceit is well deserved.

Emulate the revolutionary leadership in Cuba! Take the moral high ground too. Join the growing worldwide campaign demanding “Free the Cuban Five!”

## New Orleans cops indicted for shootings

Continued from front page

already pled guilty to covering up the shootings.

Since February federal prosecutors have charged 16 current and former New Orleans cops for crimes in the days after Katrina. The most recent indictments are part of an investigation of at least 10 shootings by police in which four people were killed.

### Danziger Bridge shootings

In the latest indictments, Sgt. Kenneth Bowen, Sgt. Robert Gisevius, Officer Anthony Villavaso, and former cop Robert Faulcon are accused of killing James Brisette, a 17-year-old Black man, and shooting four members of his family on the Danziger Bridge.

Susan and Leonard Bartholomew said they were walking to the grocery store with their two children and nephew, Brisette, when a Budget rental truck pulled up and men inside began firing on them. Brisette was shot six times in the torso, Susan Bartholomew’s arm was partially blown off, and her husband was shot in the head. The Bartholomew’s daughter was shot four times. The men in the truck turned out to be cops.

Faulcon, who is Black, is also accused of shooting a mentally handicapped 40-year-old Black man, Ronald Madison. Bowen is accused of kicking and stomping Madison as he lay dying.

Madison was with his brother Lance walking across the bridge to check on the dental office of their older brother Romell. They heard gunshots and ran. Faulcon shot Ronald Madison seven times in the back. Lance Madison was arrested and charged with attempted murder of the police. He was jailed for three weeks before he was released without being charged.

In a statement, Romell Madison said, “Our family has waited a long time for justice in this case.” He later said that he wasn’t interested in seeing the officers receive the death penalty.

Two other members of the New Orleans Police Department (NOPD), Sgt. Arthur Kaufman and retired Sgt. Gerard Dugue, are charged with helping to cover up the shootings by manufacturing witnesses, fabricating police statements, and planting a gun.

On July 16 a judge ruled that Bowen, Gisevius and Villavaso will remain in jail and not be granted bond. The officers have twice beaten state charges in the



Sherrel Johnson, mother of James Brisette, killed by cops on Danziger Bridge in New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina.

shootings. The FBI arrested Faulcon in Texas July 13.

Last month five other police were charged for shooting and setting on fire a 31-year-old Black man, Henry Glover, during the Katrina crisis. Glover was shot by a cop as he walked near a strip mall.

When Glover’s brother and another man sought help for him at NOPD’s SWAT unit compound, set up at a local elementary school, they were beaten and accused of being looters. The police took their car with Glover in the back and drove off. The scorched car was later found behind a police station and Glover’s burnt remains were found weeks later.

Danny Brumfield, a 45-year-old Black man was shot and killed by police as he tried to get assistance at the Convention Center, which was being used as a shelter. Police claim he brandished a pair of scissors at them as he approached their car. After shooting Brumfield in the back, the cops simply drove off.

Other cases include Keenan McCann, a Black man shot five times by police as he attempted to get water from a truck. He survived. After leaving the hospital, a warrant was issued for his arrest for threatening police with a gun. He was never formally charged. Matthew McDonald, a Caucasian, was shot in the back and killed by police, who claimed they saw a gun in his bag. McDonald’s family was not told he was killed by cops until four years later when a reporter contacted them about the investigation into his death.

## Financial ‘reform’

Continued from front page

ity Oversight Council” to determine “risks” to the capitalist financial system.

It establishes a consumer bureau within the Federal Reserve, replacing the Office of Thrift Supervision. The new bureau will be staffed mostly by banking regulators transferred from other government-run consumer divisions.

The bill calls for shifting the trading of some derivatives, which worldwide now encompass more than \$600 trillion, from private over-the-counter sales to public clearinghouses. Derivatives are basically bets placed on the rise or decline in the price of stocks, bonds, or other paper values.

The bill also seeks to restrict financial firms from trading funds from their own accounts. It assigns a slew of regulators from 10 government agencies to write hundreds of new rules to implement the law. The Commodity Futures Trading Commission, which will have new authority over derivatives, for example, has already asked for \$45 million for its new staff.

The Federal Reserve now becomes the “pre-eminent regulator,” stated the *Wall Street Journal*, warning that the risks are that it “still won’t be able to prevent another crisis.” The government’s central bank will continue to have authority to bail out financial institutions the government considers “too big to fail.” The new clearinghouses will also have access to discounted Federal Reserve funds.

Some of the biggest banks have grown even bigger since the government’s 2008 bailout. “Before the crisis the 25 largest had 56% of bank assets; today, it’s 59%,” the *Journal* reported.

President Barack Obama claims the new law, which his administration campaigned to pass, will lay the foundation for a stronger and safer financial system that will be less prone to panic and collapse.

“There is little in this legislation that will fundamentally change the way Wall Street does business,” Dean Baker, codirector of the Center for Economic and Policy Research in Washington, D.C., told Bloomberg News, in presenting a dimmer view. “The six largest banks will still enjoy the enormous implicit subsidy that results from the expectation that the federal government will bail them out in the event of a crisis.”

### Banks take advantage of regulations

Some of the largest banks are adopting plans to take advantage of new regulations to maximize their profits. “Compelled to trade derivatives in the daylight of closely regulated clearinghouses,” stated the *New York Times*, banks like JP Morgan Chase and Goldman Sachs “are building up their derivatives brokerage operations. Their goal is to make up any lost profits—and perhaps make even more money than before.”

Working people, meanwhile, will be hard hit by many of the changes as banks plan to pass on additional costs to their customers, with increased fees on bank accounts and credit cards. The financial “reform” law will make it more difficult for working people to borrow money. It requires banks to more closely scrutinize an individual’s income, credit history, and job status before making a loan.

While the law supposedly makes permanent that individual deposits of up to \$250,000 are insured, the increased pace of bank failures raises questions about how secure deposits will be. Ninety banks have collapsed through mid-July, a faster pace than in 2009 when 140 banks failed. These mounting bank closures have led to a Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation deficit of more than \$20 billion.

### New International

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